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S E C R E T BEIRUT 01653

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [LE](#) [SY](#)  
SUBJECT: SYRIA RATTLES ITS SABER

[1](#)1. SECRET ENTIRE TEXT.

[1](#)2. MOD SOURCES HAVE INFORMED EMBASSY OF THE FOLLOWING:

SYRIAN LINES IN THE NORTH HAVE NOT REPEAT NOT CHANGED. HOWEVER, REDISPOSITION OF UNITS HAS TAKEN PLACE TO INCLUDE POSITIONING OF TWO STALIN MULTIPLE 36 TWO ROCKET LAUNCHERS AND A PLATOON (5) OF TANKS ON KEY TERRAIN FEATURE (OVERLOOKING VILLAGE OF IBRIE WHICH FACES THE CAZA OF JUBAYL (BYBLOS) WHICH IS JA'JA'S TURF.) ADDITIONALLY, WHAT APPEARS TO BE SYRIAN ARMORED BATTALION (20-25 TANKS) HAS TAKEN UP POSITIONS BETWEEN BATROUN AND SHIKA. 3,000 TROOPS OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ARMY ALSO HAVE MOVED INTO POSITIONS AROUND BISHRI, WHICH IS HOME VILLAGE OF JA'JA', AND THEY ARE FORTIFYING THESE POSITIONS.

[1](#)3. COMMENT: ALL REDISPOSITIONS ARE WITHIN EXISTING SYRIAN LINES. THAT SAID, THEY SEND A CLEAR AND OBVIOUS SIGNAL. WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF THIS INFORMATION. BUT IF THE SYRIANS USE FORCE AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS IT WILL HAVE DEVASTATING IMPACT ON THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND COULD WELL FORCE THEM TO RALLY ROUND THE FLAG CARRIED BY THE JA JA GROUP. WE WOULD ALSO BE BLAMED BY SOME--CITING OUR "DEFACTO ALLIANCE" WITH THE SYRIANS AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS--AND SUBJECTED TO APPEALS TO INTERCEDE WITH THE SYRIANS.

[1](#)4. SYRIA MAY, INDEED, BE ONLY RATTLING ITS SABER AT THIS POINT. WASHINGTON AND DAMASCUS MIGHT NONETHELESS CONSIDER APPROACHING SARG TO CITE REPORTS OF SYRIAN REDISPOSITIONS AND TO SAY THAT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IS WORKING POLITICAL SOLUTION TO THE INTERNAL DISPUTE AND SYRIAN USE OF FORCE WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND DAMAGING FOR UNITY AND STABILITY OF LEBANON. END COMMENT.

[1](#)5. DAO REPORT IRR 6 857 0135 85 CONTAINS FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT.

BARTHOLOMEW